

# GENOCIDE BY THE JEWS IN THE JEWISH BIBLE : IMPLICATIONS OF COUNTER READINGS FOR JEWISH -MUSLIM RELATIONS.

Yakov Zinberg

## ユダヤ教聖典に描かれたユダヤ人によるジェノサイド —ユダヤ・ムスリム関係に関する解釈の意味を探る—

ジンベルグ・ヤコブ

“The devil can cite scripture for his purpose”<sup>1</sup>

悪魔も聖書を引きあいに出すことがあるものだ、自分勝手な目的にな<sup>2</sup>

### Key words :

Jewish Bible, Genocide, Jewish-Muslim Relations, Anti-Semitism, Communism, Counter Readings, Baruch Goldstein.

本稿は、ユダヤ教の聖典であるモーゼ五書に記述されている、カナン地の攻略の際ユダヤ人に対して行われたジェノサイドの呼びかけを、批判的に検討しようとするものである。アモリ人との戦いの経緯を例にとりながら、聖書のテキストについての様々な解釈を示し、その一例として、イスラエルの医師バルフ・ゴールドシュタインが1994年イスラエルの祝日プリムに、伝統となっているユダヤ教の聖典『タナフ』の一部『エステル』朗読の後、ヘブロンで27人のイスラム教徒を殺害した事件を検討する。プリムには、ユダヤ人は、ペルシャ王クセルクセスの妻であったユダヤ人女性のエステルが、ユダヤ民族を絶滅から救ったことに感謝し、大いに浮かれ楽しむべしとされていた。他民族のうちに離散し、孤立しながら、あらゆる場所で生計を営み、王の宗教も含め、他の宗教を認めず、自らの宗教を守り続けるユダヤ人全員を絶滅せよと進言したのは、王の側近で、アマ

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1 Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Act 1, Scene 3. See <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/merchant/merchant.1.3.html> (Accessed on November 2, 2012).

2 『ヴェニスの商人』、第一幕第三場、シェクスピア全集、1964年、筑磨書房。

り人の末裔ハマンである。聖典では、これに対しユダヤ人は王から自衛への許可をとりつけ、わずか1日の間に、7万5千人のペルシャ人を殺害し、ハマンは王の命により絞首刑となった。

ユダヤ教聖典に存在する様々な解釈を踏まえ、本稿は、ユダヤ・ムスリム関係の改善のために聖典を用いることの非生産性を指摘するとともに、生産的な例として、エジプト及び統治下のパレスチナにおける共産主義運動の展開で、ユダヤ人が重要な役割を果たした事実を指摘する。<sup>3</sup>

Reporting on October 26, 2012, *the Jewish Chronicle*, a popular British newspaper, indicated that Peter Jenkins, the retired Foreign Office diplomat, Britain's former representative at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while addressing the debating union at Warwick University recently and commenting about the nuclear proliferation issue in Iran, said as follows: "Israelis don't practise an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, they practise ten eyes for an eye and ten teeth for a tooth... The idea that a just war requires the use of force to be proportionate seems to be a Christian notion and not a Jewish notion."<sup>4</sup> One remains naturally puzzled regarding specific sources which might have inspired Jenkins' approach. Given the peculiarity of Jewish history, one might also be inclined to view such an approach as yet another representation of Anti-Semitism. Finally, considering the ongoing conflict involving Israel and Palestine, it seems appropriate to review Jenkins' remark in the context of Jewish-Muslim relations at large.

It is well worth mentioning that such an inquiry could be viewed as an integral part of a larger relevant scholarly project, whose latest achievements, to provide an example, are rooted in the collapse of the former Soviet Union, which has resulted in the limited opening of previously closed archives both in the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe. As Jason Heppel has fairly noticed, historians are becoming more and more interested in "who exactly were the communists" during the "communist era", **indicating that** "when confronted by this question, one aspect emerges with particular force: the high proportion, relative to the national population as a whole, of people of Jewish background within communist parties. A Jewish presence could be observed above all in the Soviet Union, where Jewish communists counted amongst most prominent figures in the party elite, including Leon Trotsky, Maxim Litvinov, Grigori Zinoviev, Lev Kameney, Lazar Kaganovitch, Yuri Larin And Karl Radek. Of Bela Kun's twenty-six ministers and vice-ministers in the short-lived Hungarian Communist republic of 1919, twenty were Jewish. In

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3 2012年本稿著者は、American University (Washington, DC, USA) と、ユダヤ教徒・キリスト教徒・ムスリム教徒の関係を研究する Woolf Institute (Cambridge, UK) が共同で主催した "Bridging the Great Divide: The Jewish-Muslim Encounter (『大いなる深淵にかけられた橋: ユダヤとムスリムの出会い』) オンライン・コースを優秀な成績で終了した。

4 Sheinman, Anna. "A Just war? That's Just Not Us, Says Ex-Envoy". *The Jewish Chronicle*, 26 October, 2012.

1930, 51 per cent of the Polish Communist Party's youth section and approximately one-quarter of its adult membership were Jewish, even though Jews only formed 10 per cent of the country's population. Throughout most of its history, over one-third of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States were Jews.”<sup>5</sup> Heppel, however, “admits that despite the prominence of Jewish communists, historians have rarely addressed the Jewish origins of party members either before or after the fall of the Berlin Wall.”<sup>6</sup>

Considering the case of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), **authors of a monograph** devoted to the issue of “communists and British society” have also pointed out an exceptionally large number of Jewish members, viewing “the CPGB's Jewish enclaves as a form of ethnic mobilization… If on the one hand the CPGB's very marginality suggests its limitations as a vehicle for integration into the national mainstream, the concentration of Jews in a relatively small number of well-defined urban communities profoundly shaped the character of local party organizations in those districts. In some respects they almost resembled the ‘Hebrew’ or Jewish unions and union branches previously established in the same areas…”.<sup>7</sup>

For their part, Dan Diner and Jonathan Frenkel have adjusted the research agenda as follows : “…what lies concealed behind the phrase ‘Jews and Communism’ is a subject marked by exceptional variety and complexity. Apart from anything else, two distinct themes are grouped under the single heading. On the one hand, there is the issue of Jews as Communists, primarily as party members but also significantly as ‘fellow travelers’. And on the other, there is the issue of Communist policy toward the Jewish people, Judaism, and Jews.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet another recent opinion as it is, Jerry Muller proceeds to claim that Jews “embraced socialist movements because they promised to end individous distinctions. Most socialists attributed the hold of anti-Semitism to capitalism itself, so that eliminating capitalism was understood as a formula for eliminating anti-Semitism. The most radical and uncompromising of these movements was Communism.”<sup>9</sup>

Investigating the same issue in the context of Jewish-Muslim relations, Rami Ginat has conducted a highly unique critical inquiry devoted to identifying and analyzing the role of Egyptian

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5 Heppel, Jason L. “A Rebel, not a Rabbi : Jewish Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain”. *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.15, No.1 (2004) : 29.

6 Ibid.

7 Morgan, Kevin, Cohen, Gidon and Flinn, Andrew. *Communists and British Society., 1920-1991*. London : Rivers Oram Press, 2007 : 189.

8 Diner, Dan and Frankel, Jonathan. “Jews and Communism : The Utopian Temptation” in Frankel, Jonathan (ed.), *Dark Times, Dire Decisions. Jews and Communism*, p. 3, Oxford University Press, 2004. (Studies in Contemporary Jewry. An Annual XX).

9 Muller, Jerry Z. *Capitalism and the Jews*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2010 : 10-11.

Jews in the evolution of local communist movement,<sup>10</sup> the theme which has not yet been adequately researched by qualified scholars.<sup>11</sup> Based on a multitude of valuable sources made available in the wake of the collapse of the former USSR, Ginat's monograph critically observes communist movement in Egypt starting from late 1910's, the initial phase of organized local communist movement, through early 1950's when "the decisive decline of the influential position of Jews in Egyptian communism" occurred, featuring deportation of Henri Curiel, Hillel Schwartz, Marcel Israel, and many other prominent Jewish communists.<sup>12</sup>

To a very considerable extent, Ginat's keen interest in the issue of evolution of communist movement in Egypt stems from his long-term research in the field of the Soviet Union's involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. In his monograph devoted to the issue of relations between the former Soviet Union and Egypt from 1945 through 1955, Ginat opposes a prevailing opinion which tends to relate the former Soviet Union's initial involvement in the Middle Eastern affairs to the period following Stalin's death in 1953. Ginat claims instead that the former Soviet Union's encroachment in the Middle Eastern affairs may be traced to the period of the Second World War duration.<sup>13</sup> Ginat also claims that up to the late 1940's the former Soviet Union's involvement in the Middle Eastern affairs primarily centered upon preparing local communists to lead a future revolution.<sup>14</sup> However, in an article which Ginat co-authored with Uri Bar-Noi, the authors convincingly demonstrate that seen in a historical perspective the Soviet Union's attitude towards in particular the Palestine issue was far from being consistent.<sup>15</sup>

While Ginat's monograph is not specifically concerned with the issue of Jewish-Muslim relations, its central theme being formulated as the investigation of a role the Jews played in the evolution of the Egyptian communist movement, Ginat's research in fact contributes as well to studying Jewish-Muslim relations at large and in particular demonstrates their enormous positive

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10 Ginat, Rami. *A History of Egyptian Communism. Jews and Their Compatriots in Quest of Revolution*. Boulder : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

11 A similar in terms of content brief case study of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) has been recently completed by Nissim Kazzaz who examined in particular the ICP Jewish members' estimate of the *Farhud* pogrom against Jews of Baghdad which occurred on 1-2 June, 1941, resulting in the murder of as many as 179 Jews. See Kazzaz, Nissim. "The Communists in Iraq and Rashid 'Ali al-Kaylani's Revolt" in Moreh, Shmuel and Yehuda, Zvi (eds.), *Al-Farhud. The 1941 Pogrom in Iraq*, 173-185, Jerusalem : The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2010.

12 Ginat, p. 2.

13 Ginat, Rami. *The Soviet Union and Egypt, 1945-1955*. London : Frank Cass, 1993 : p. xi.

14 Ibid., p. 12.

15 Ginat, Rami and Bar-Noi, Uri. "Tacit Support for Terrorism : The Rapprochement between the USSR and Palestinian Guerilla Organizations Following the 1967 War." *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30. No. 2 (April 2007) : 255-256.

potential. Founders of the Egyptian organized communist movement were foreigners of European origin, the most prominent of whom were of Jewish descent : Joseph Rosenthal, who founded a communist group in Alexandria, and A. Krauss, founder of the Cairo communist group. Ginat points out that “Jewish members featured prominently” in the Egyptian Communist Party’s (ECP) activities and “worked closely and amicably with their Egyptian compatriots. In other words, there is no evidence to show the existence of racial or ethnonationalist tensions”, which accounts for the fact that when Egyptian authorities succeeded in curtailing the ECP’s activities and the party stood in need of reorganization, the Comintern (**the Communist International**) proceeded to dispatch to Egypt “several high-ranking emissaries, many of whom were of Jewish origin.”<sup>16</sup>

The Palestine Communist Party (PCP) played a major role in the evolution of anticolonial struggle, with both the Jews and the Arabs having been engaged in a joint struggle for the sake of achieving the common goal. The PCP founder and its most senior member was Abu Ziyam (alias of Wolf Averbukh), **a Jew, who was also instrumental in reviving the ECP activities during the second half of 1920’s.**<sup>17</sup> In mid-1920’s the PCP attempted to establish a united front between PCP and Poale Zion.<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that the Poale Zion movement socialists, according to Anita Shapira, were atheists “uncomfortable with arguments basing the right of the Jewish people to their land on historical ties, on religion and the Bible. Just as the revolutionary movement in Russia claimed that the land belonged to those who cultivated it, they too believed that labor itself conferred the right of land ownership”.<sup>19</sup>

Ginat flatly rejects those arguments which indicate that Jews “chose communism as a reaction to the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe in 1930’s”, emphasizing that many Jews decided to participate in local communist movements during the prefascist era and continued their communist activities after massive deportations of communists from Egypt in the late 1920’s. As Ginat fairly stresses, some of the Jewish communist deportees in the 1940’s and 1950’s, including Joseph Rosenthal and Henri Curiel, founders of the Egyptian communist movement, eventually turned into “national communists”, seeing Egypt as their homeland and even, like Curiel, regarding

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16 Ginat, *A History of Egyptian Communism. Jews and Their Compatriots in Quest of Revolution*, p. 374.

17 Ibid., pp. 389–392.

18 Ibid., p. 142.

19 Shapira, Anita. *Berl : The Biography of a Socialist Zionist. Berl Katznelson, 1887–1944*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009 : p. 28. (Digitally printed version; translated from Hebrew by Haya Galai).

themselves as Egyptian political exiles.<sup>20</sup>

However, returning to textual implications of Peter Jenkins' position, one is naturally driven to proceed towards a critical inquiry in the religious sphere. The basic representative biblical texts that might have most probably inspired Peter Jenkins' position, may be identified in particular in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and relate to the issue of the nations of Canaan. A few relevant quotations might be most useful :

### **Exodus 23 : 23-33 :**

*[23] When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I annihilate them, [24] you shall not bow down to their gods in worship or follow their practices, but shall tear them down and smash their pillars to bits... [27] I will send forth my terror before you, and I will throw into panic all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn tail before you. [28] I will send a plague ahead of you, and it shall drive out before you the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites. [29] I will not drive them out before you in a single year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply to your hurt. [30] I will drive them out before you little by little, until you have increased, and possess the land. [31] I will set your borders from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of Philistia, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; ; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and you will drive them out before you. [32] **You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. [33] They shall not remain in your land, lest they cause you to sin against Me; for you will serve their gods—and it will prove a snare to you.**<sup>21</sup>*

### **Deuteronomy 7 : 1-5**

*When the LORD your God brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess, and He dislodges many nations before you – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations much larger than you – (2) and the LORD your God delivers them to you and you defeat them, you must doom them to destruction : grant them no turns and give them no quarter. (3) You shall not intermarry with them : do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. (4) For they will turn your children away from Me to worship other Gods, and the LORD's anger will blaze forth against you and He will*

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<sup>20</sup> Ginat, A *History of Egyptian Communism. Jews and Their Compatriots in Quest of Revolution*, p. 376.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, translated sacred texts are borrowed from *Tanakh. The Holy Scriptures. The new JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Philadelphia/ Jerusalem : The Jewish Publication Society (1985).

*promptly wipe you out. (5) Instead, this is what you shall do to them : you shall tear down their altars, smash their pillars, cut down their sacred posts, and consign their images to the fire.*

### Deuteronomy 20 : 10-18

*(10) When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace. (11) If it responds peaceably and lets you in, all the people present there shall serve you at forced labor. (12) If it does not surrender to you, but would join battle with you, you shall lay siege to it; (13) and when the LORD your God delivers it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword. (14) You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, the livestock, and everything in the town – all its spoil – and enjoy the use of the spoil of your enemy, which the LORD your God gives you.*

*(15) Thus you shall deal with all towns that lie very far from you, towns that do not belong to nations hereabout. (16) In the towns of the latter peoples, however, which the LORD your God is giving you as a heritage, you shall not let a soul remain alive. (17) No, you must proscribe them – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites – as the LORD your God has commanded you, (18) lest they lead you into doing all the abhorrent things that they have done for their gods and you stand guilty before the LORD your God.*

### Numbers 33 : 55-56

*(55) But if you do not dispossess the inhabitants of the land, those whom you allow to remain shall be stings in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land in which you live; (56) so that I will do to you what I planned to do to them.*

Genocidal behavior by the Jews is depicted not only in Torah, containing the Five Books of Moses, but as well, for instance, in the “Prophets”, **an integral part of the Jewish sacred texts** collectively known as “Tanakh”, **widely termed “the Jewish Bible”, which includes the Torah.** After storming the city of Jericho, the Jewish armed units (Joshua 6 : 21-25) “exterminated everything in the city with the sword : man and women, young and old, ox and sheep and ass”, proceeding to “burn down the city and everything in it”, while local residents showed no signs of resistance whatsoever.

Returning to the Torah commandments, it is necessary to emphasize that while they are being clearly formulated, the critical analysis of a variety of related biblical texts demonstrates that they were hardly ever properly fulfilled or consistently followed, with counter readings being plentiful. Suffice it to examine, as an example, the issue of extermination of the Amalekites.

The commandment to exterminate the Amalekites is contained in Exodus 17 : 14-16 : (14)



Then the Lord said to Moses, "Inscribe this in a document as a reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua : I will utterly blow out the memory of Amalek from under Heaven!" (15) And Moses built an altar and named it Adonai – nissi. (16) He said, "It means 'Hand upon the throne of the Lord!' The Lord will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages."

Yet another relevant commandment is found in Deuteronomy 25 : 17–19 : (17) Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt – (18) how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. (19) **Therefore, when the LORD your God grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a hereditary portion, you should blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!**

A passage of a similar content might be identified in 1 Samuel 15 : 2–3 : (2) Thus said the LORD of Hosts : I am exacting the penalty for what Amalek did to Israel, for the assault he made upon them on the road, on their way up from Egypt. (3) No go, attack Amalek, and proscribe all that belongs to him. Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep. However, battles against Amalek continue to the time of Saul, who is accused of disobeying the commandment to annihilate the Amalekites as follows (1 Samuel 15 : 16–20) : (16) Samuel said to Saul, "Stop" Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night!" "Speak", he replied. (17) **And Samuel said, "You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel. The Lord anointed you king over Israel, (18) and the LORD sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and proscribe the sinful Amalekites; make war on them until you have exterminated them.'** (19) Why did you disobey the LORD and swoop down on the spoil in defiance of the LORD's will?" (20) Saul said to Samuel, "But I did obey the LORD! I performed the mission on which the LORD sent me : I captured King Agag of Amalek, and I proscribed Amalek, and the troops took from the spoil some sheep and oxen – the best of what had been proscribed – to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

The Amalekites appear again in the biblical text in 1 Chronicles 4 : 42–43, referred to as having been finally annihilated : (42) And some of them, five hundred of the Simeonites, went to Mount Seir, with Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, sons of Ishi, at their head, (43) **and they destroyed the last surviving Amalekites, and they live there to this day.** However, a continued presence of the Amalekites despite the commandments to annihilate them is seen in references to the origins of the Ephraimites (Judges 5 : 14) : (14) From Ephraim came they whose roots are in Amalek, and to Haman the Agagite (Esther 3 : 1) : Some time afterward, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite; he advanced him and seated him higher than any of his fellow officials.

Besides, biblical inconsistencies become far more complex from a historical point of view. Ste-



phen Geller argues that by the time of the book of Deuteronomy the Canaanites hardly constituted a substantial threat to security of the Israelites<sup>22</sup>, while Robert Cohn has identified in the biblical texts a number of varying constructions of the Canaanites<sup>23</sup>. Ironical as it is and adding further confusion, textual controversies regarding nations of Canaan have also served to provide, according to Stephen Geller, the “very categories” for the persecution of “covenant Israel” because “in Christian culture the ‘Canaanites’ par excellence were, of course, the Jews themselves – not an aboriginal ‘people of the land’ but of the original Promise, expelled from it by their crime of deicide, manifesting their continual perversion by child murder and arcane magical rites.”<sup>24</sup>

Deserving to be mentioned is yet another negative modern connotation of the issue discussed, in particular as it relates to the Jewish-Muslim relations sphere at large, which has been defined by Delbert Hillers as the consequent “conviction that the Near East is, for the Westerner, something alien, backward and a little obscene.”<sup>25</sup> Carrying the issue further and referring specifically to the “eurocentric concentration on the evidence of the Bible”, Niels Peter Lemsche asserts that the prevailing scholarly view of the Near East “only leaves room for the evidence of the Bible. The Bible establishes a filter through which all other information has to be sifted. The result is a distortion of fact not preserved in the Bible. When the filter of biblical readings combines with colonialism, the dynamism of the biblical hatred against the Canaanites turns into a political program for the suppression of other nations also in modern times”.<sup>26</sup>

Speaking of the contemporary related events, one is bound to recall Baruch Goldstein who in 1994 gunned down twenty-seven Palestinians in the Cave of the Makhpelah in Hebron, after which he was killed by the crowd. There seem to be many Jews who regard the biblical texts appealing for extermination of Gentiles as being prominent and highly meaningful : Goldstein’s grave in the public square in Kiryat Arbah, near Hebron, remains a place of pilgrimage and worship. According to Rosemary Radford Ruether, Professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., who visited Hebron in January of 1996, “the most shocking aspect of this experience was glimpsing the narrow worldview of the militant Jewish settlers, their unapologetic-

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22 Geller, Stephen A. “The Sack of Shechem : The Use of Typology in Biblical Covenant Religion.” *Prooftexts* , Vol.10, No.1. (January 1990) : 4-6.

23 Cohen, Robert L. “Before Israel : The Canaanites as Other in Biblical Tradition.” In Silberstein, Laurence J. and Cohn, Robert L. (eds.), *The Other in Jewish Thought and History. Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, 75-90, New York&London : New York University Press, 1994.

24 See Geller, Stephen, p. 14.

25 Hillers, Delbert R. “Analyzing the Abominable : Our Understanding of Canaanite Religion.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New series, Vol. 75, No. 3 (1985) : 254-255.

26 Lemsche, Niels Peter. *The Canaanites and Their land. The Tradition of the Canaanites*. Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1999 : 5.

ic religious and racial exclusivism... For these settlers, God has chosen only one people, loves only one people, has given the land of Israel to only one people -- the Jews. To seize land and expel Palestinians is viewed not as an injustice but as a religious duty to "redeem" the land from infidels." <sup>27</sup>

For his part, Yitzhak Rabin, former prime minister of Israel, speaking in the Knesset, Israeli parliament, stated as follows : **"As a Jew, as an Israeli, as a human being, I am shamed by the disgrace imposed upon us by a degenerate murderer.... To him and to those like him we say : 'You are not part of the community of Israel.... You are not part of the Zionist enterprise. You are a foreign implant. You are an errant weed. Sensible Judaism spits you out. You placed yourself outside the wall of Jewish law. You are a shame on Zionism and an embarrassment to Judaism.'"**<sup>28</sup> Not surprisingly, in his outstanding monograph devoted to political violence and extremism in Israel, Ehud Sprinzak mentioned that "the settlers' political struggle against Rabin had assumed a highly personal character. They hated him and he despised them". <sup>29</sup> Moreover, Sprinzak directly relates Dr. Baruch Goldstein's murderous act to the assassination of Rabin, revealing that *Baruch Hagever : A memorial Volume for Dr. Baruch Goldstein, the Saint, May God Avenge his Blood*, was read by Yigal Amir, the assassin, who afterwards referred to "Rabin's cultural war against the Jews". <sup>30</sup>

Representing the religious Jewish community and making a statement which happened to be rather rare as an estimate offered by a Jewish religious figure, Dr. Albert Friedlander, Rabbi of Westminster Synagogue, London, commented, that the "slaughter in Hebron...was a clear, pre-meditated act rising out of a community dedicated to a view of religion which has dehumanized its neighbours and which claims to be acting in the name of God – a claim denied by all other Jews who are not caught up in that maelstrom of extreme fundamentalism". <sup>31</sup> Dr. Friedlander's remark clearly admits the existence of competing religious views of the "Other" among the Jews, which, in a wider analytical context, serves to confirm the existence of inconsistencies in biblical texts regarding in particular the issue of the extermination of Gentiles. A competing religious

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27 Ruether, R. "Jewish settlers as pushy 'chosen people", *National Catholic Reporter*, 32, 26 (1996) : 12, Religion and Philosophy Collection, EBSCO host, viewed 3 November 2012.

28 "After Penance." *New Republic*, 210.12 (1994) : 7-8. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCO host, viewed 3 Nov. 2012.

29 Sprinzak, Ehud. *Brother Against Brother : Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination*. New York : The Free Press, 1999 : 253.

30 Ibid., p. 264. For the English translation of Hagever's monograph see [www.angelfire.com/anime5/danilin/PodeUmatzil.html](http://www.angelfire.com/anime5/danilin/PodeUmatzil.html) (Accessed on November 1, 2012)

31 Friedlander, Albert. "God's Own Terror". *The Guardian* (London UK) , 4 March, 1994. ProQuest Historical Newspapers : The Guardian (1821-2003) and The Observer (1791-2003).

view has been put forward, to provide an example, by Rabbi Moshe Levinger whose efforts first led to the establishment of a new Jewish settlement at Kiriyat Arba near Hebron and later culminated in the reconstruction of an ancient Jewish neighborhood inside Hebron, where the Cave of the Patriarchs, a sacred Jewish and Muslim site, known in Islam as “Sanctuary of Abraham”, is located.<sup>32</sup>

It is hardly coincidental that Baruch Goldstein committed his murderous attack after reading the Scroll of Esther during the Jewish religious festivity of “Purim”, which depicts Amalek as a symbol of evil, the progenitor of Haman, the would-be destroyer of the Jews according to the Purim story. Seeing the Arabs at large literally as biblical Amalekites, Goldstein must have failed to differentiate and “discern at that moment of passion between 29 Muslim worshippers, men and young boys in a mosque, and the imminent anti-Semitic threat of annihilation”.<sup>33</sup> The truth of the matter is, however, that Goldstein’s choice is being one of many legitimate interpretations of the relevant biblical texts, while the plentiful attempts to create a “more politically correct holiday” by means of “promoting a new heroine and downgrading a more traditional one”, frequently implying references to feminist perspectives, only serve to ascertain the legitimacy of Goldstein’s alleged interpretation as indeed one of a multitude of available options, no matter how uncivilized and utterly inhuman it was.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of the Jewish-Muslim dialogue, standing out is a highly positive initiative of a group of Jews and Muslims engaged in promoting mutual understanding, who on March 6, 1994, in the wake of Goldstein’s murderous act, gathered at the West London Synagogue, thanks to late Rabbi Hugo Green’s offer to use the synagogue hall area, and succeeded in conveying their “shared horror and distress at what had happened” to a very large number of participants in the event.<sup>35</sup> During this unique meeting readings from Jewish and Islamic tradition were offered. Citing the Holy Qur’an Sura 5 : 32, the Muslim readers proclaimed :

*That was why we laid it down for the Israelites that whoever kills a human being, except as a punishment for murder or other villainy in the land, shall be looked upon as though he had killed all mankind, and that whoever saved a human life shall be regarded as though he had saved all*

32 “Hebron Massacre Was Waiting to Happen”. *The Times of India* News Service, 5 March, 1994 : 15. ProQuest Historical Newspapers : The Times of India (1861-current).

33 Abadian, Sousan. “Taming the Beast : Trauma in Jewish Religious and Political Life.” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. 82, No. 2/3, (Winter/Spring 2008) : 233.

34 See Wisse Schahter, Abby. “The Problem with Purim.” *Commentary* (February 2010).

35 Magonet, Jonathan. *Talking to the Other. Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims*. London : I.B.Tauris, 2003 : 183-185.

mankind.<sup>36</sup>

Citing the Jewish source, Genesis 25 : 7–10, the Jewish readers pronounced as follows :

*Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Muchpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar, the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife.*<sup>37</sup>

However, as a concluding remark, I should mention that what emerges on the basis of my brief attempt to identify counter readings in the biblical texts and assess the origins of Peter Jenkins' critical view is a clear enough implication that the Jewish sacred textual tradition contains a mixture of both universalistic and particularistic features, which can hardly serve as a reliable foundation for bridging the gap separating Jews and Muslims.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 187.